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COMMUNICATIONS.

The Doctrine of Election.

Elder Roberts.—My appeal comes time since, to the Hyper-Calvinists to write something in elucidation of this peculiar feature of their system has met with no response whatever. I am sorry for this; for I was sincere in my desire to see, from some one able to do the subject justice, an exposition of the so-called "hard-shell" doctrine. Some good men hold to this doctrine, and I wish to know why they can hold to that while, to me, seems contrary to reason and at war with revelation.

I believe in the "Election of God" as strongly as any one, but I reject wholly the interpretations put upon it by Hyper-Calvinists; for, as yet, I have seen neither revelation nor reason brought to its support—according to my judgment—sufficient to cause me to accept it. And I do not believe that my non-acceptance of this feature of Theology, born of the Reformation, is, as many writers and speakers on this subject strongly intimate, because of an unregenerate state of the heart and of the mind. I hold myself as ready to accept, adopt and preach Calvinism wherever it can be shown to be a biblical doctrine, or a reasonable doctrine, as I am to preach baptism to day. And I can point to, as to persons men with as powerful minds who religiously oppose this doctrine, as can be found among its advocates.

I do not think I need to be told what the doctrine is or what the articles of faith say, for with both I am and have been familiar all my life. I ask simply for an intelligent reason, or a proper application of Scripture to support the doctrine. Allow me to state in general terms this doctrine and my objections to it:—1. That man is totally depraved and unable to restore himself to the favor of God. *Utly dead in trespasses and sins, spiritually.* That he is born into the world in this state—a prisoner bound in sin and capable of no choice except to sin, and continue sinning. In other words, he is a free agent only to do evil.

2. That a definite number of particular persons of this family of depraved humanity were unconditionally elected to be effectually called, regenerated or converted, and sanctified; and kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. That all the means for this purpose were ordained, with reference to none but the elect. And that no one else will be saved because not elected of God.

3. That the punishment of the non-elect will be eternal, in the state of fire and brimstone, or place commonly called Hell, because they will not repent and turn to God.

Now, I submit that this is simply monstrous, and, if true, then the mercy of God is too limited for any except the elect to admire, and is more than cast in the shadows of night by the unparalleled cruelty of casting into a burning hell the untold millions of earth—helpless inhabitants, poor, sin-bound prisoners—for no other reason than that first of all he had not elected them to salvation, and ordained the means to save them.

I cannot see why a merciful God should so severely punish a man for being and doing what, under his providence he was brought into the world under bonds to do, and compelled to do, because God would not free him from these bonds? Does God glory in human suffering? Will the endless torment of any poor soul be such a sweet savor to him that he would make me just to let me be damned? No! No! "God will not the death of any"; and this doctrine of election taught by Calvinists makes him will the death of all whom he does not elect to save. Why could he not elect to save all? He certainly foreknew all—and the election of a few is the rejection of all the rest.

But why send them to hell? If they were bound by their sinful nature to commit sin, then it was not of free choice, but compulsory, and so they are not responsible. Why hold them accountable at a judgment? He that bound them thus, is to blame and not they. They are no more responsible than infants and idiots. Indeed, according to this monstrous doctrine, all infants dying at once to an eternal awful Hell; for we are sure the means have not been ordained for the effectual calling, regeneration, conversion, sanctification, etc., etc., of infants. Infants and non-elect adults are alike helpless. Why send them to Hell? Why punish them? Where is any justice in such a proceeding? If Hell is not that awful place we

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NO. 13.

have heard so much about; if it is not a place of punishment, but merely of purgatorial influences, then I might accept this theory of election. But then I would be drifting into Universal salvation, and I do not believe in that—not quite. [You are nearer on that ground than is safe.—Ed.]

One other chance of escape is left from this logical dilemma, and that is, to suppose that Hell is not such a bad place after all, and that as the non-elect are generally satisfied with their condition on earth, it is presumable they will be in hell also, and therefore it is no cruelty to cast them off into that region as much drift-wood that is not needed anywhere else.

I think the mistake made by the advocates of this theory is that they argue *a posteriori* from certain facts and certain Scriptural texts which they most probably misinterpret back to a supposed principle upon which God must act in order to produce the results apparent to them. And in this they fail; for human language is not framed to embody the principles governing the councils of heaven and by which the providence of God is regulated. The phrase: "Eternal, unconditional election of a definite number of the human family to grace and glory," is an unscriptural phrase; it is unreasonable; and it is not supported by any fair interpretation of Scripture text that I have as yet seen applied to it. I hold, therefore, that those who guess this was the principle Deity acted upon in the matter of election have not comprehended it all in setting forth a supposed principle, have done violence to the character of God, as revealed in his word.

I accept the "Election of God" as a doctrine of the Bible as cheerfully as any one; but I accept it as a mystery too profound for human comprehension, and altogether beyond expression in an article of faith. I accept it in the same general terms as in our New Hampshire Confession of Faith, which most of our churches are now adopting—especially where the missionary spirit of Christianity prevails.

I cannot, under present convictions, accept a principle in Theology which does not allow me to hold to the following doctrines, viz:—

1. The satisfaction and merit of Christ for all mankind.
2. The grace of God hath appeared for all men and all accountable beings are at least at some time in life, endowed with a *gracious ability*.
3. The voluntary use of this gracious ability issues in Regeneration.
4. Hence, Faith, Justification and Sanctification all follow as the result of Regeneration.

It is my opinion that if a soul goes to Hell—is lost—it is not because God did not in the first place elect it to salvation, but because it tramples upon all the means ordained to save it, and in opposition to the love of God, in contempt of the blood and tears of Jesus, and despite the workings of the Holy Spirit, scorns the ministry of the word, the entreaty of friends, the admonitions of conscience, the warning of Divine Providence, and, preferring the cup of worldly pleasures, sells his salvation for a mess of pottage, and goes to hell, not because he chose to, but as a consequence of not choosing to be saved by means at his command.

I write this article still in the role of an anxious enquirer after Truth. Are there not some of our old men, who have long studied this subject, and know something about it, that will write something for a young man to profit by in the years to come? I have written at length and pointedly with the purpose to arouse some one on the question. Shall I fail? I am waiting to hear, and hope yet to learn something on the subject.

W. E. T.
[We turn W. E. T. over to some of our correspondents. Can't some one lift him out of the mire?—Ed.]

Dear Brother Gambrell.—I came from Sarepta to Pleasant Ridge, Mt. Moriah and Mt. Cromfort churches. Eld. John Sanders, the *Banergers* of this country, is pastor of these churches. I found both pastor and people ready to co-operate in the good work. Here I met with old Father Wilkins, one of the purest men I ever knew. From thence I came to Concord, Turkey creek and Spring creek. At the latter place we had, on the fourth Sabbath, a gathering together of the ministers of this section and it was a grand good time, the largest congregation I have met. I presented our work, and all seemed to enter into the spirit of it heartily. Eld. Blount, of Pittsboro, is pastor here—a noble, good brother. Indeed, I find all of

our pastors ready to co-operate. I am sure our State Mission work will succeed when all our churches are developed.

From Spring Creek I came via of Pilgrims Rest Dividing Ridge to this place (Shiloh.) This church is *away over* in the fork of Schoona and Yalobpsa. Here, and at the other churches mentioned above, I find a *grand good* people. I am firmly of the opinion that this little Calhoun Association by proper attention can be developed into one of the most efficient little bodies in the State—this is decidedly a Baptist country. An old brother in this section thinks I ought to stay here a month, and "stir up the Baptist." I have been out on this tour sixteen days and preached twenty-six sermons, and raised in cash in subscription \$98.00. I will report weekly, so that you, and through you, the brethren may know what I am doing.

Yours respectfully,
H. L. FISLEY,
COLE'S CREEK, MISS., May 1, 79.

Associations and Conventions Scriptural and Right.

I affirm that our method (the Baptist method) of doing this work is Scriptural, and right, and as nearly upon the plan laid down in the Holy Word as existing circumstances will allow. This assertion I hold myself bound to prove by competent testimony; which I now proceed to submit. The best method of determining this inquiry, is to examine the New Testament, and compare ours with apostolic proceedings. If our organizations, and proceedings are found to be the same as theirs, it will be acknowledged by all that they are Scriptural and right.

About ten years after the ascension of Christ, some of the disciples, especially of Cyprus and Cyrene, went down into Syria, and preached Christ in Antioch, the capital city of that country. The hand of the Lord was with them. He poured out his spirit, and many were brought to the knowledge of the truth. The church in Jerusalem was not an uninterested spectator of these events. It is said (Acts 11:22) "Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem, and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch." In this statement three particulars strike our attention, each of which is in perfect coincidence with the missionary action of the present day, and against which some of our ministers and churches have (by their conduct at least) set themselves in strong opposition.

The first is that, the church in Jerusalem recognized our doctrine just explained, as true, and acted upon the principle that she was a missionary organization. The record is that Barnabas, one of her members, and a minister, given her to do the work of preaching the gospel was sent by the church in Jerusalem to preach in Antioch, a city of another nation. This was a foreign mission. What! exclaims a brother. What do you say? The church sent a minister to preach; God sends ministers to preach; not the church. We regret exceedingly that it seems impossible for some of our brethren to comprehend that the church has the mind of Christ, that when he calls a minister, it is for the church, and that she has his direction, and her sending him, as the church in Jerusalem did Barnabas, does not by any means conflict, but on the contrary, is in entire accordance, with the fact that he is sent by Jesus Christ. We will cite a case to illustrate this point.

The church in Antioch, subsequently sent out two missionaries, Barnabas and Saul, to the heathen, of whom it is said (Acts 13:34) "When they (the church) had fasted and prayed, and they (the Presbytery of ministers in the church) had laid their hands on them (the church and ministry in Antioch) sent them away." It is immediately added in the 4th verse, "So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost departed." The church acted under the word of inspiration, and therefore what they did was said to have been done by the Holy Spirit. We have the same word of inspiration, the New Testament, and the same providence to indicate the field of labor. Why then, when we so act, may we not consider our doings also directed and sanctioned by the Holy Spirit? I cannot forbear here to remark, that, on their return, having visited and preached in Cyprus, Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Derbe, Lистра, and many other places, with great success, they, in the same missionary style constantly witnessed at our anniversaries, made their report to the church which sent them out. I refer for proof to Acts 14:27, "And when they were come, and had

gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles."

The third particular is, that the church in Jerusalem as the church in Antioch, which followed their example, did in effect, to Barnabas and Saul when they sent them among the Greeks, assigned Barnabas his field of labor. They sent him to Antioch. And why should they not have done so? If the work is theirs, may they not send their servants where they please? Our brethren have no objection to a minister's following his own impressions of duty as to the place where he will preach. Cannot the church perceive the indications of Providence, and decide as well as the minister upon the place? The minister is her servant to do her work. May he not be directed by her? May not the farmer decide in what particular field or part of the field it is most desirable and proper that his hands shall labor? or are his servants to decide and labor only according to their discretion, and allow him no direction? If our first principles be true, and we think they cannot be disproved, ministers in this matter, are bound to "hear the church."

Now, who will say that the church in Jerusalem, or that in Antioch, did wrong? No man in his right mind will presume to say they erred? If it was not wrong for them to do the work of missions singly, it was not wrong for them to unite to do it. Union is strength. The church itself is built upon the principle of uniting naturally separate energies to do good. If it was not wrong for them, it certainly cannot be wrong for us. On the contrary, as we have the apostolic churches for our example, and the word of God commanding their action. We dare not disregard them all, remain inactive, and not incur the condemnation of Christ as disobedient servants who had hid our Lord's talent. The Macedonians elicited from Paul a high eulogy because they not only gave themselves to the Lord, but they also gave themselves to one another by the will of God. They were not satisfied with their own separate individual piety, or holiness, nor were they content with their own separate individual exertion in the cause of Christ. They better understood the will of God, they united in the work, thus concentrating and increasing their power to spread abroad divine truth.

Take if you please, by the way of further proof, an illustration of the point before us, a few instances of churches, in apostolic times, united to spread the gospel as commanded by Jesus Christ.

"Thanks be to God," says Paul addressing the Corinthians! (11. Cor. 8:16-20.) "Who put the same earnest care in the heart of Titus for you?"—He went unto. And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches, and not that only, but *whom we have chosen of the churches to travel with us.*

That brother who was sent by the apostles as the companion of Titus, on his visit to the Corinthians, was chosen of the churches to travel. But could the churches (observe the churches, there were several we know not how many) have united in their choice upon a particular individual to travel as a minister without concert or design? Must there not have been consultation and agreement to secure united action.

Evidently this concert, this consultation, this agreement in a specified appointment could not have been had without either a miracle, which we have no reason to suppose was wrought in the case, or a *Convention* or what is the same thing, coming together of some kind.

One more example shall suffice. Having occasion to write to the Corinthians, Paul referring to the circumstances respecting his support, under which he at first preached the gospel to them says (11. Cor. 11:8) "I robbed other churches taking wages of them to do you service." In all cases, let it be understood, the apostles took nothing of the Gentiles among whom they labored as missionaries, but looked to the churches for the means of life. From his own statement we learn, that several churches that were located in other parts of the country how many we cannot determine, united in the support of Paul, while he preached the gospel in Corinth, till the church there was planted and established. Did this union in so laudable an object as that of supporting a missionary in the great city of Corinth, and which involved some of the particulars of fixing his wages, take place among these churches without intention, or design? Certainly not. How then

could it have been secured without a convention of the churches? I speak to wise men.

Interview With a Liberal Christian.

Not long since I had a little bout with one of those exceedingly generous Christians, who insist that it matters very little what a man believes, provided he is sincere. He was very heavy on the believers of what he called *creeds* in general, and on me for believing the *exclusivism* (as he termed it), of Baptists, in particular, insisting on how much more magnanimous it was, to throw away all creeds, and be liberal enough to allow each one to choose his own belief.

I replied to him about as follows: "Then you really believe that it makes little or no difference what any one believes, provided he is sincere?" "Certainly." "Then," said I, "that is your creed. Now, do you not see, my dear sir, that you are in just as arbitrary a manner trying to dictate your creed to me, as any of the sects you censure dictate their creeds to you? But let us look at it from another stand-point. You say it is no matter what any one believes; then of course it is also no matter what he does not believe." "Certainly, that is my belief." "Then," said I, "I do not believe a word of it, and of course it is no matter." He left at that point of the conversation.

"Call to the Ministry."

No. 3.
As I have given, as best I could under the circumstances, the authority for a call to the ministry, I will now proceed to notice—

1. *The Evidence.* These will be treated as internal and external.

1. Internal evidence. Such evidence will be found to consist in piety, out of which grows a strong desire; devotion; and a deep sense of unworthiness, arising from a feeling of general inability to discharge the duties of such a calling.

2. Piety. By this is meant a dutiful spirit to God. It is not every one who possesses this spirit, that is called to preach; but it may be said, that those who do possess it, have one of the fundamental elements of such a call. Piety is the soil out of which other evidences grow, so it has been put down as a starting-point—as a centre around which Christian duties revolve.

The piety, in one called of God to preach, is accompanied by a strong desire in that direction. How says Paul, in his letter to Timothy? "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." (1. Tim. 3:1.)

The existence, then, of such a desire, is an evidence of being called to the work of the ministry. And those who possess such a feeling, both eagerly and fixedly (for the word implies), should enter their Master's work without further delay. Not, however, without caution. For one may desire this office from wrong motives. One might think it a suitable position for the display of talent; or as a calling suited to the indolent, or even as a convenient way of making a support without much effort. If these, or any other selfish motive, give rise to such a desire, the man in whose breast it is cherished, will soon be found falling away, without any possible hope of recovery.

The desire must come from a dutiful spirit; and love for Christ, together with an anxious longing for the salvation of others, must be the controlling motive. Says Paul: "The love of Christ constraineth me."

3. Devotion. This will serve as a test of the genuineness of the desire. If a minister is perfectly devoted to his work, men have little grounds to question his being called of God. Upon the other hand, if secular employments engross the mind and heart, serious doubts may arise as to the genuineness of such a call.

I do not claim here, that no minister is to follow, in connection with his preaching, a secular pursuit. It is often necessary that this should be done; but I will give this in the future. Devotion is what we want! A man who will, if necessary, give up friends and money, kindred and even his life for the gospel's sake, must be called. When such is the case, the desire cannot be questioned, nor is evidence wanting.

4. A sense of utter unworthiness. Well may a man who feels it his duty to preach, inquire: "Who is sufficient for these things?" It is a very easy matter to talk about

preachers and preaching, but when it comes to such a point, that we have to take God's words, and hold them up before wicked men and women, a weakness is felt.

When God made known to Moses his work in connection with Israel, he readily replied: "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh? They will not believe me . . . I am not eloquent, but slow of speech."

Paul never forgot that he was a sinner. He considered himself the "chief of sinners." The least of all the saints. Says he, "I am by grace what I am." He was nothing, but Christ was all. His sufficiency was of God, who made him an able minister of the New Testament.

Such have been the feelings of true ministers in all ages. No wonder such men are humble. They ought to be so, since not a word uttered will be effectual without God's sanction. Let us be weak, for when we are weak, then are we strong.

Christian Progress.

No. 13.
Christianity is diffusive in its tendencies. The more one has, the more he wants. The more there is in his family and church, the more does he desire to labor for its propagation in the world. Every prayer he utters, every step he takes, and every dollar he spends for its dissemination has a rebounding influence for his own spiritual welfare. The Christian who does nothing and cares nothing (if such a thing be possible), for the spread of the gospel, is sure to be barren of personal grace, as well as domestic influence for good.

The glory of God in the salvation of the world is the overshadowing desire of the genuine Christian. His love for God is supreme and his desire to promote his glory will correspond with his love for him. He learns from his word, that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Now shall he be still and do nothing for the accomplishment of an object, for which his Father and Redeemer have made such a sacrifice? Do nothing? when God has assigned him the honorable position of a co-laborer in the great work? No, never. His heart is filled with the theme, his hands are ready for the work, his purse is at the Master's disposal.

There is, perhaps, no thought so heart-sickening to the missionary in a heathen land, as that he is forgotten by his brethren at home. He has torn asunder the ties of kindred and friends—has cut himself off from the associations of Christian companionship—has exposed himself to the dangers of an unhealthy climate—has plunged into the moral gloom of paganism—all to work in the Master's cause, that his name may be glorified and the heathen saved. Shall he not be remembered by those Christian friends at home who desire the same object? It will enlarge their hearts to pray for his blessing on the labors of his servants.

In the closet, at the family altar, in the service of prayer-meeting, and in the great congregation, the burden of the Christian prayer is, "Thy kingdom come."

When such a Christian hears the glad news of the success of the gospel in pagan lands, he remembers with joy and gratitude that this is the very object for which he has prayed. His faith is thereby strengthened and he is better prepared to go to God for greater blessings.

The faithful Christian is not content with praying for the conversion of the world, but he will labor for it. If he cannot go himself, he can point out the destitution to others, hunt up laborers and invite them into the field. But the laborers will not only need encouragement, but material aid. This he is ready and willing to give.

The word of God has to be translated and printed in many different languages. It must be scattered among the people. A living ministry must preach to them the gospel. Heathen children have to be taught the principles of civilization and Christianity. All of these things necessarily involve expense, which must be met mainly by Christians or not at all. With these facts before us, what sort of heart has the Christian who hesitates to give us the Lord has prospered him for this cause?

There are over two millions of Baptists in the United States, nearly three-fourths of whom reside in the South. It may be safely estimated that there are a half million

of white Southern Baptists who could give an average of one dollar per year each, for this cause and be none the worse off for it. Yet but little over fifty thousand dollars will cover the annual contribution of this vast host of the friends of Jesus. No wonder, we are so poor financially and lean spiritually. Let us awake and bestir ourselves, and some of us may live to see the time when "a nation shall be born to God in a day."

F. COURTNEY,
MT. LEBANON, LA.

From Texas.

Bro. Gambrell.—Please accept a short communication in fulfillment of an implied promise, which you may print or not. As I cannot hope to give you any news, nor to be able to discuss any subject of interest, and as I am so continuously employed, I did a foolish thing to make such a promise. I ask myself why did I do it? As we often judge others by ourselves, so, being much interested myself to hear from friends in Mississippi, I imagined they would care to hear from me. It is consoling to think we are not forgotten; but like much of our present happiness, (and, for that matter, our unhappiness too), it is often a mere illusion with which we cheat ourselves. The importance we think we are to others, is imaginary. What is any one man, what his presence or absence, his wealth or woe to those busy with their own thoughts and labors? A goat sitting upon the horn of a ruminating ox, and proposing to relieve him of his weight if it be oppressive. As to the life we live in our friends, it is much the same to be forgotten as to be dead; but even to that oblivion must we all come at last.

I was reluctant to leave Mississippi, and came here at last, only, as I thought, on a visit. But soon after I arrived here, it seemed that "between us and you there was a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you could not; neither could they pass to us that would come from thence." On whichever side it might be, I found myself; I was forced to remain. After seeking long in vain, I at last found work in Texas, teaching and preaching. I was everywhere told there is plenty of room in Texas; but said some the right way is for a man to make his own field. I have heard, the Indians throw their infant children into a river, and if they drown, say they were not worth the trouble to raise. "Is not a patron, my lord," said Dr. Johnson to Chesterville, "one who looks on with indifference while a man is struggling in the water, and when he has at last reached the shore encumbers him with his assistance?"

Such is too often the courtesy of one minister to another. Much that I received was amply paid with "that simplest, easiest, readiest recompense." But not all. A brother told me it is the custom here to place a stranger coming in at the foot of his class; and if he can spell his way up, as in a school, it is all right; that no man antecedent are regarded at all, etc. We can imagine how this has come about. Years ago, it used to be, when an acquaintance was formed here, one said, "Friend, what made you come to Texas?" "O, I killed a man and had to leave the States." "Give us you hand, then," said the other; "I stole a horse." So at last it was concluded best to let bygones be bygones and say nothing about antecedents. I was only too glad to enter any class; nor am I trying to spell up. My experiences confirm the proverb, "Though a man's heart deviseeth his way, the Lord directeth his steps." I am not sorry I came to Texas.

It were idle in me to attempt to write about this great State as a country. Some first impressions I may give, as they are still vivid. There is foundation in truth for what has been said, that it is a country of extremes, with every thing intermediate, the coldest and the hottest, the wettest and the driest, the richest and poorest of countries. Certainly the wind blows and the grass grows here, and there might be produced enough of "beef and corn for each man born." Poultry, it seems, is indigenous and spontaneous, and literally swarms everywhere. I buy eggs now at five cents per dozen. A lady neighbor recently sold thirty dozen at one time. As of the city of Washington, we may say Texas is a country of "magnificent distances," every thing, in the natural features of it, is on a grand scale; and grand expanse of rolling prairie, great stretches of timber, and broad alluvial meadows. The future of the country, too, is a prospect of magnificent distances. It is filling up and developing with great rapidity.

J. B. HAMBERLIN,
OCEAN SPRINGS, May 5, 1879.

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JOB WORK.

All kinds of Job Work, not inconsistent with the character of the paper, executed in good style and on moderate terms.

I would like to say something of the Baptists of Texas; the Baptists, with all their faults, "their people are my people, their God, my God; where they live would I dwell and where they die there would I be buried." But I have written perhaps too much already. I would only say they compare favorably with Baptists anywhere.

Before closing, I may say I have read the reply of J. L. P. to my vindication of my ministry in Mississippi, and add that I think it enough to say I have read it, and there leave it. What are our churches developing into? Can any tell?

Yours,
W. H. HEAD,
BRAZOS CO., TEX., April 24, 79.

From the Coast.

Brother Gambrell.—On behalf of the churches at Handsboro, Biloxi, and Ocean Springs, I return thanks to the churches, brother Bowen is serving for their kindness in donating his time to us during the month of April. It was kind in them to make this self-sacrifice for the benefit of our mission work here, while at the same time they will pay his salary as though he had not been absent from them. The amount we collected from him here only saved him about \$20.00 over and above his expenses; and, his extra labors, day and night, were worth far more than this. But the churches here are poor, and only wished they could have given him more. For, his labors among us were faithful and efficient, and they have endeared him to the hearts of our people.

The meetings were good at every place. The churches were much revived, and a deep impression was made upon the people at large. There was one baptized at Handsboro, three at Biloxi, and one at Ocean Springs, the latter was the elder son of our late brother J. M. Roberts, formerly of Meridian. This looks like a small number to be baptized during the four weeks. But this indicates a success here, equal to fifty five baptized at any of our inland churches where the people are all Americans and all the public sentiment is Protestant or Baptist. But such are the obstacles here through foreign and Catholic elements that it is a great gain to add one single valuable member. And such has been the failure of Protestant efforts here that I have felt it absolutely necessary to the success of these Baptist churches, to be very cautious about adding new members. And, I am glad to say that thus far our members have, almost to every one, been faithful and consistent. We are thus commanding the respect and confidence of the people generally.

These meetings, and especially the preaching of brother Bowen have set forward these churches very much; and now expect a future growth and strength here far more than I ever did before.

The visits and lectures of brother David, also, were a great benefit to us, and were well received by our brethren. And, out of their poverty they gave him I learn about as much as did some of our old and independent churches elsewhere in the State.

But the lumber seizures, a year ago, and the yellow fever last year, so interfered with the business interests of our people that they are not yet able to support themselves in a pastor or supply. But one or two more years of prosperity may enable them to hold their own without much if any aid from the Convention. I tell of this, we cannot be certain, for the business pursuits here are so peculiar, and the population itself so fluctuating, that if these churches should be able to support a pastor one year, they might not be able to do so the next. And at two or three places, where every thing depends upon the summer visitors, it may be necessary to aid them by the Mission Board for years to come, for it is very much like the mission-work at the Seamen's Bethels in New York and New Orleans. They are thoroughfares where the comers and goers must be fed with the word of life as they pass, or they will never receive it at all. And another reason is, the great body of the permanent citizens are Roman Catholics, and it will take years of missionary labor to win over enough of them to make self-sustaining Baptist churches. And in these towns, there is as much need of missionaries, and will be, perhaps, some time yet, as there is in Italy itself.

J. B. HAMBERLIN,
OCEAN SPRINGS, May 5, 1879.

If a man will tell me what he thinks of his neighbors, I can tell him what his neighbors think of him.—*Josh Billings.*

